

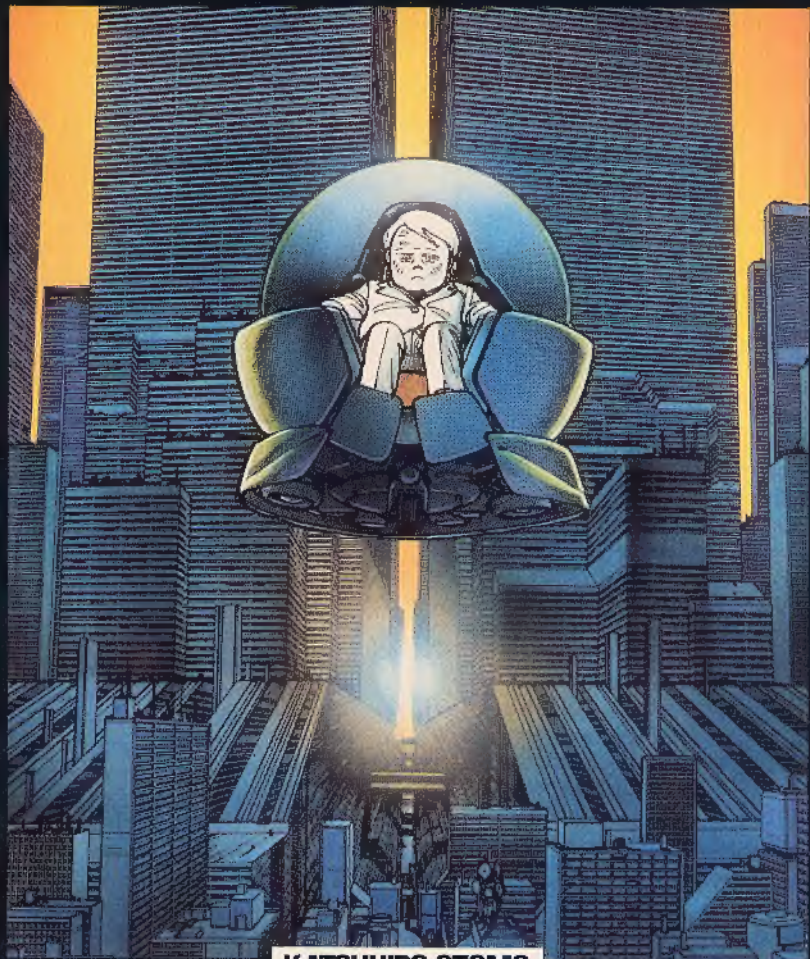
AKIRA

2

TM



EPIC COMICS® \$3.50 • \$4.75 CAN. • VOL. 1, NO. 2



KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Published monthly by EPIC COMICS, INC.
A New World Company
Office of Publication:
387 Park Avenue South,
New York, NY 10016

AKIRA™ Vol. 1, No. 2.

Copyright © 1988 MASH-ROOM Co., Ltd.

All rights reserved.

First published in Japan in 1984
by Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.

No part of this book may be printed
or reproduced in any manner
whatsoever, whether mechanical or
electronic, without the
written permission of the author
and publisher. The stories,
characters, and incidents in this
publication are entirely
fictional. All characters appearing
in this book and their
distinctive likenesses are trademarks
of MASH-ROOM Co., Ltd.

English language translation is copyright
© 1988 MASH-ROOM Co., Ltd. and
Kodansha Ltd. All rights reserved.

"Epic Comics" is a registered trademark
of EPIC COMICS, INC.

AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 2

PURSUIT

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo**, plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where, thirty-eight years before, the first of the bombs fell.

Kaneda and his friends—teenaged delinquents from the local vocational school—have made an unauthorized motorcycle run into the old city to check out the site and found far more than they expected. In an area said to be totally deserted, they encounter a strange, wizened-faced child, known only as **Number 26**. He is terrified of something and is possessed of extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends. Then, he vanishes.

Kaneda's gang find themselves in trouble with the authorities following the incident, and learn, to their surprise, that the "police" they encountered after the accident were not normal officers, but part of some secret concern. Moreover, **Tetsuo**, who they believed had been taken to a hospital, has disappeared.

The next night, at **Harukiya**, a tough local dive, **Kaneda** brazenly attempts to pick up **Kay**, a strange girl who catches his fancy. **Kay**, however, is not interested. In fact, she and her companion, **Ryu**, are part of an underground resistance organization, dedicated to learning what is happening in the old city and putting a stop to it.

During the mayhem that ensues, both the delinquents and the resistance fighters again encounter **Number 26**, and again he uses his powers, to catastrophic effect. Both groups are scattered, but first **Ryu** and then **Kaneda** re-encounter **Number 26**. Ryu attempts to reassure the paranormal boy, but **Kaneda** is anxious to punish him for injuring **Tetsuo**.

As they argue, the mysterious soldiers pursuing **Number 26** reach the scene, armed and ready.



Kaneda



Number 26



Kay



Tetsuo



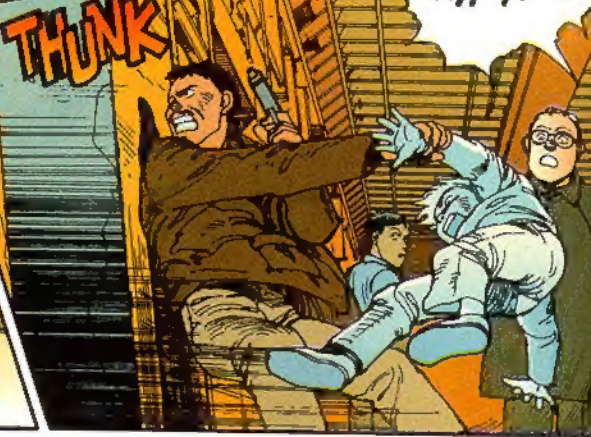






THUNK

WHOA--!



SKREE



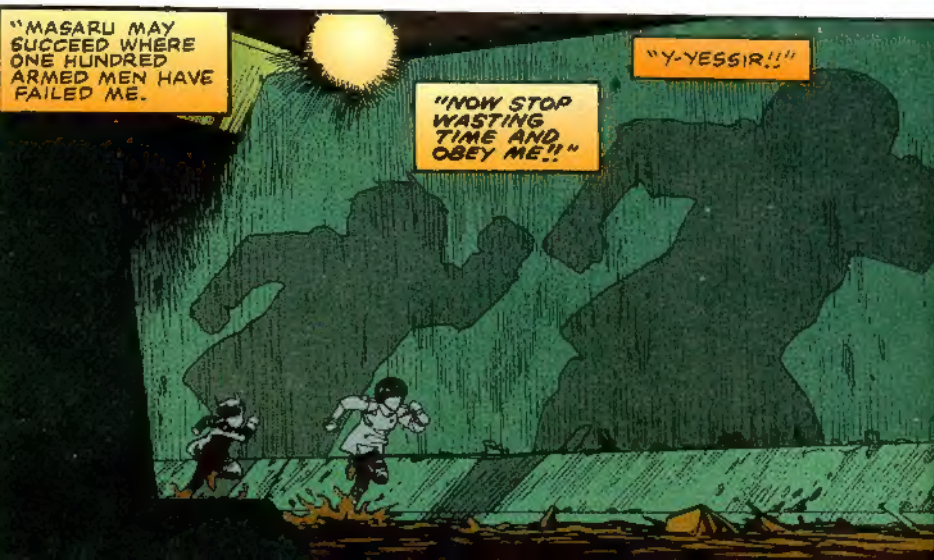
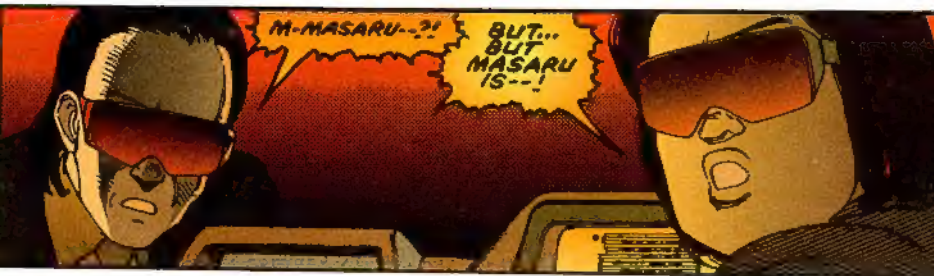
BLAM

**THEY'RE
IN THE
SHOPPING
CENTER!**

**CIRCLE
AROUND THE
OTHER
SIDE AND
CUT THEM
OFF!**





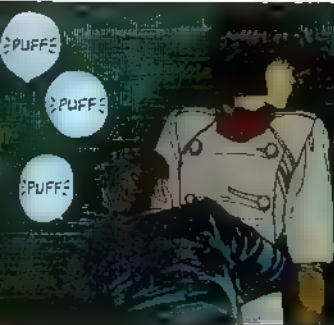




OH!!



THIS WAY!
QUICKLY!



PUFF

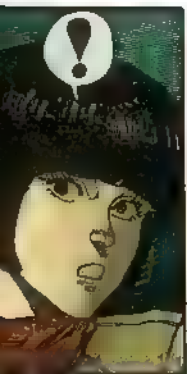
PUFF

PUFF

I THOUGHT
I SAW
SOMETHING!

BRING
A
LIGHT!

BREAK
OUT THE
INFRA-
RED!



!



PUFF

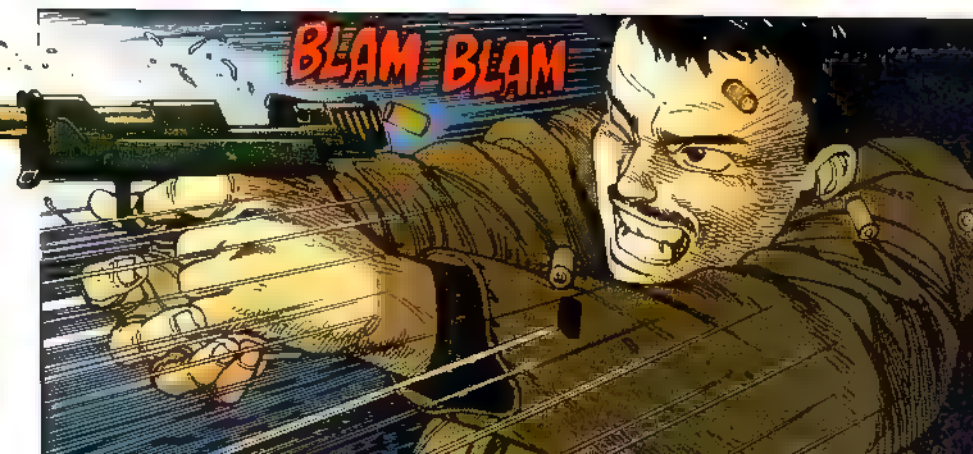
PUFF

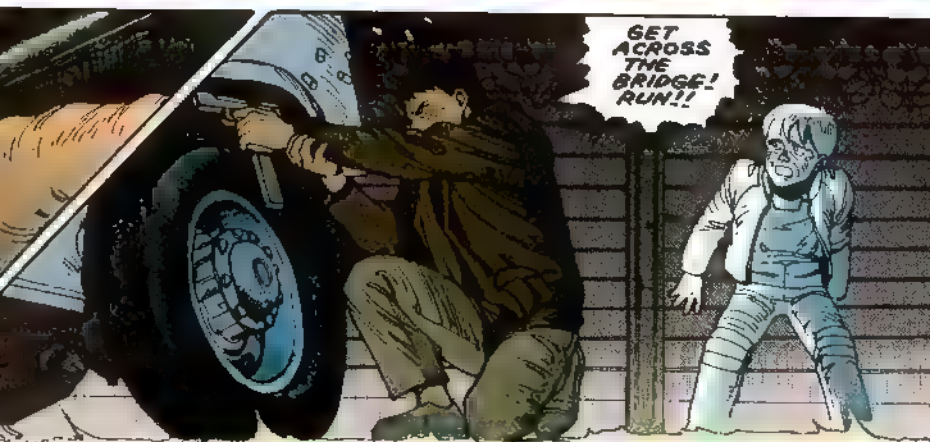
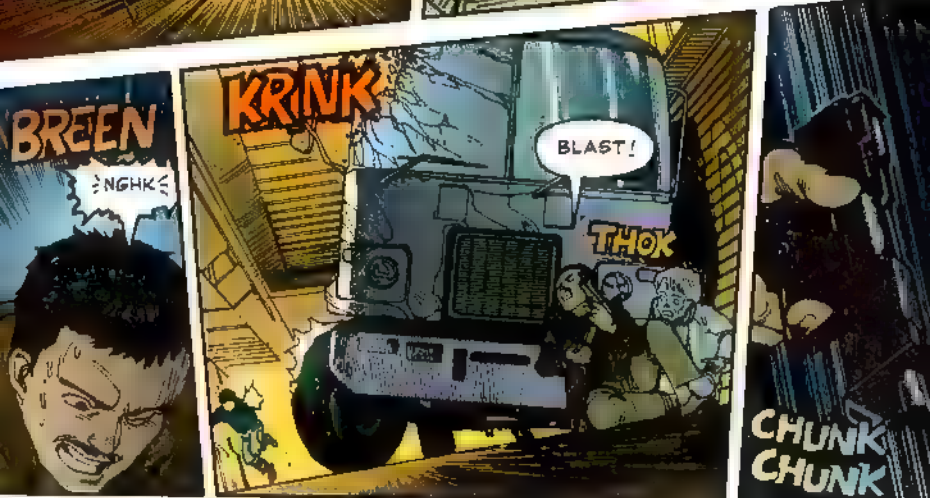
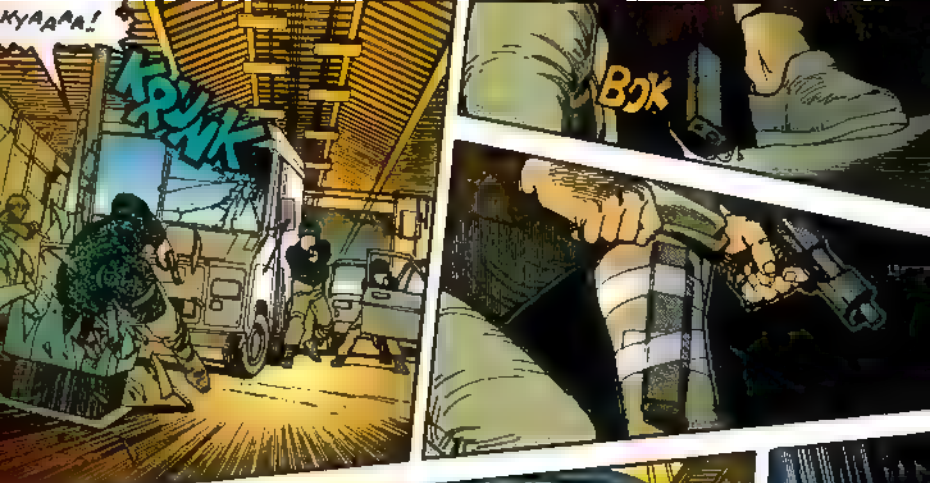
PUFF

PUFF

THEY'RE
IN THE
SHOPPING
MALL!

COME
ON! THE
OTHER
UNIT HAS
FOUND
THEM!





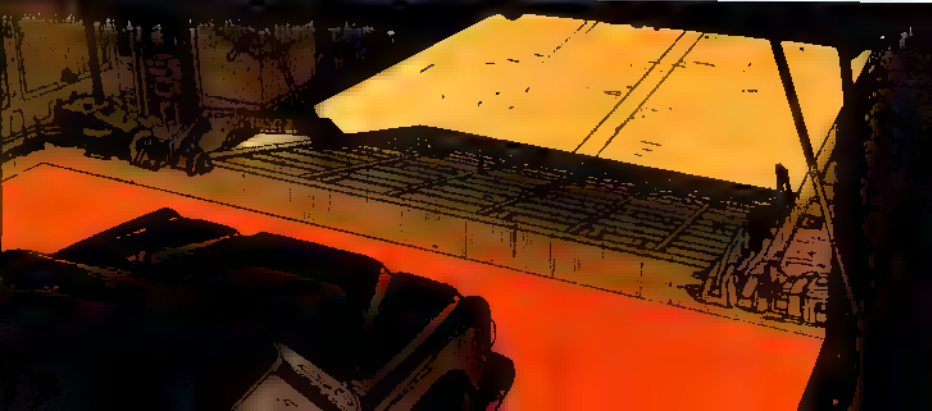
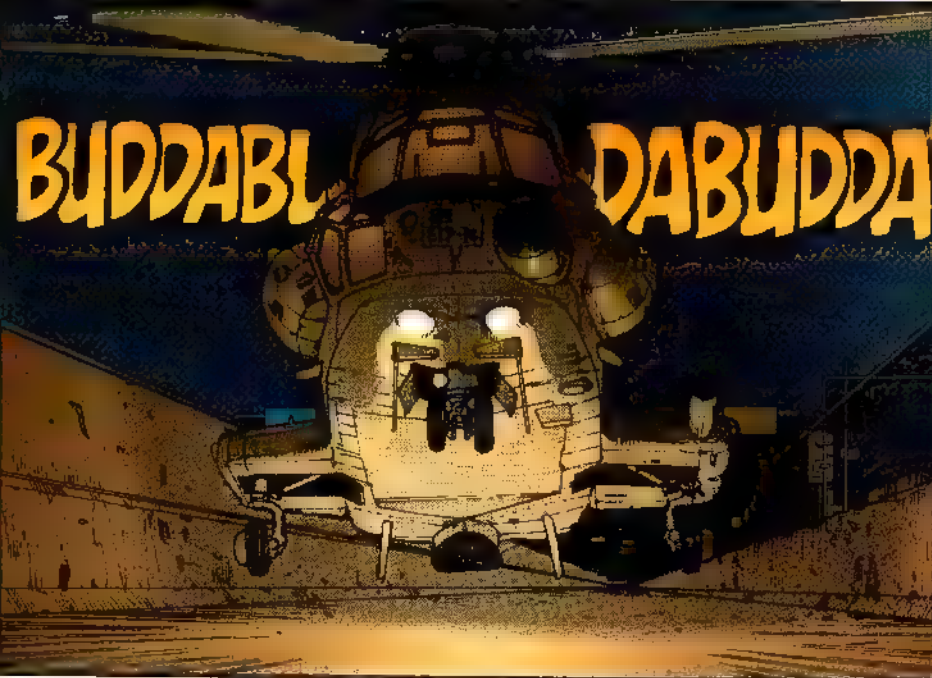
HALT

**NO VEHICLES
PERMITTED PAST
THIS POINT**

WARNING



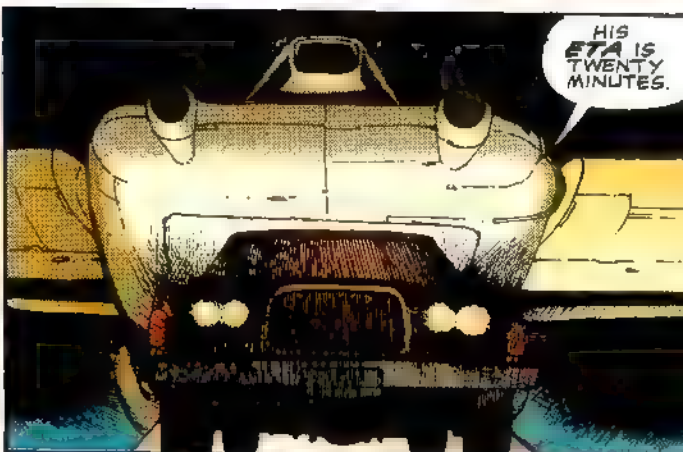
BUDDABL DABUDDA



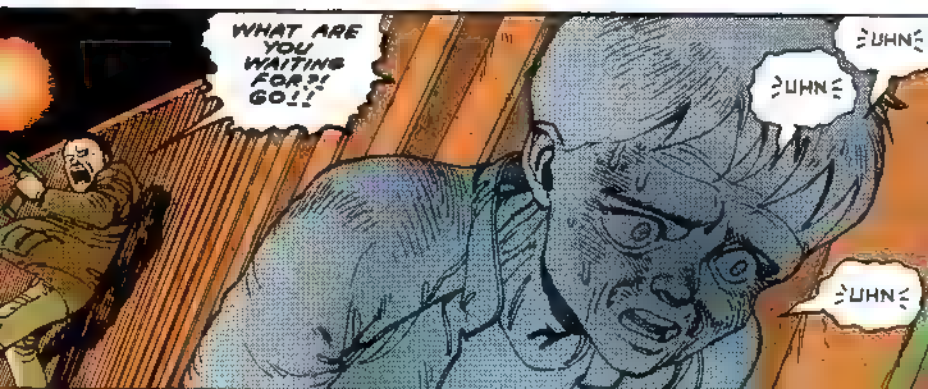


WE'VE RECEIVED
WORD HE'S PINNED
DOWN BY THE
CANAL IN THE
EIGHTEENTH
DISTRICT, SIR.

WHEN IS
MASARU
EXPECTED?



HIS
ETA IS
TWENTY
MINUTES.

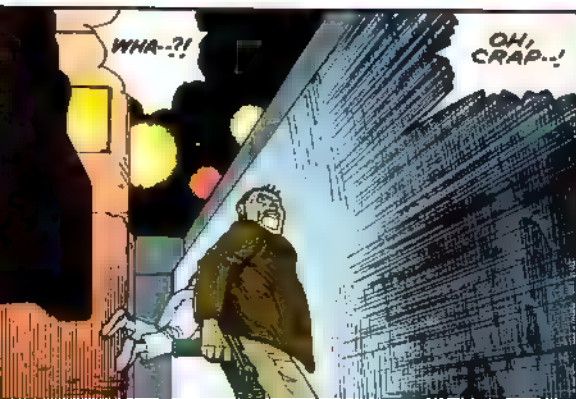
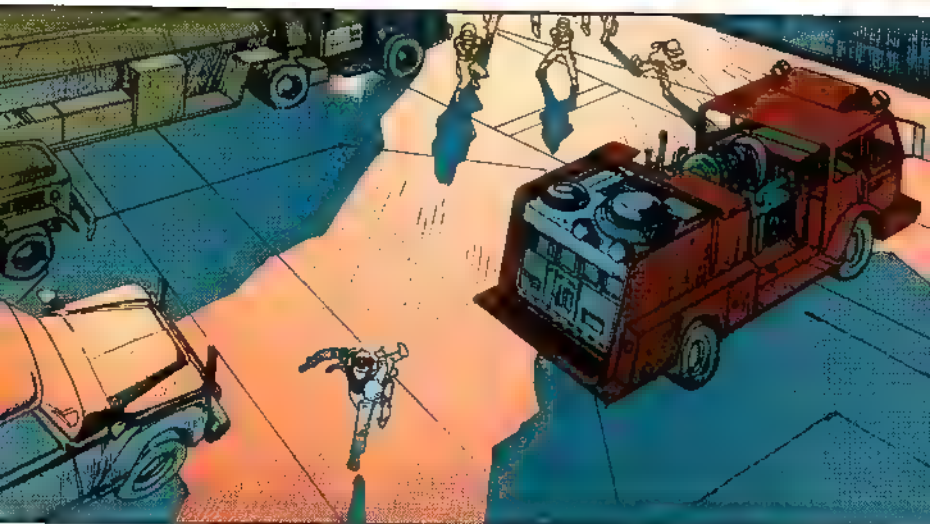


WHAT ARE
YOU
WAITING
FOR?!
GO!!

THUNK

THUNK

THUNK

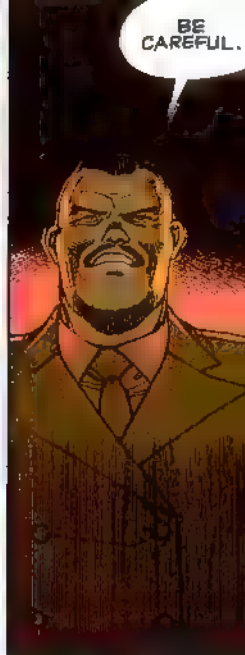
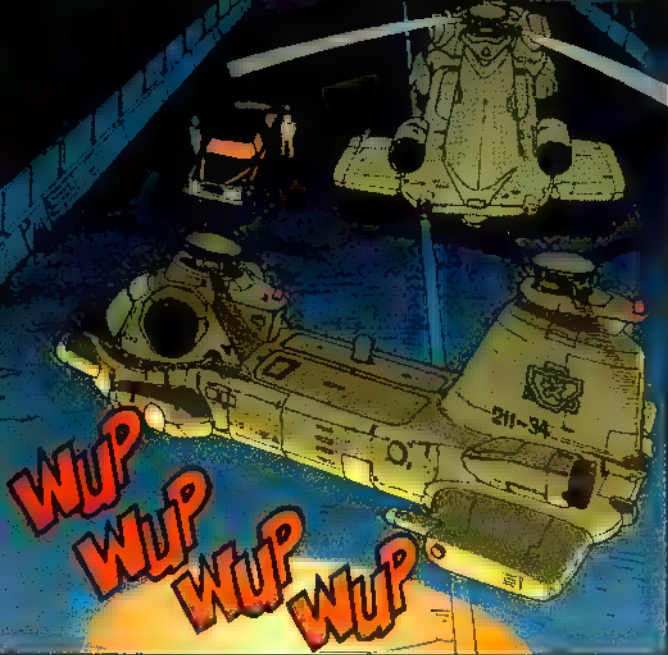


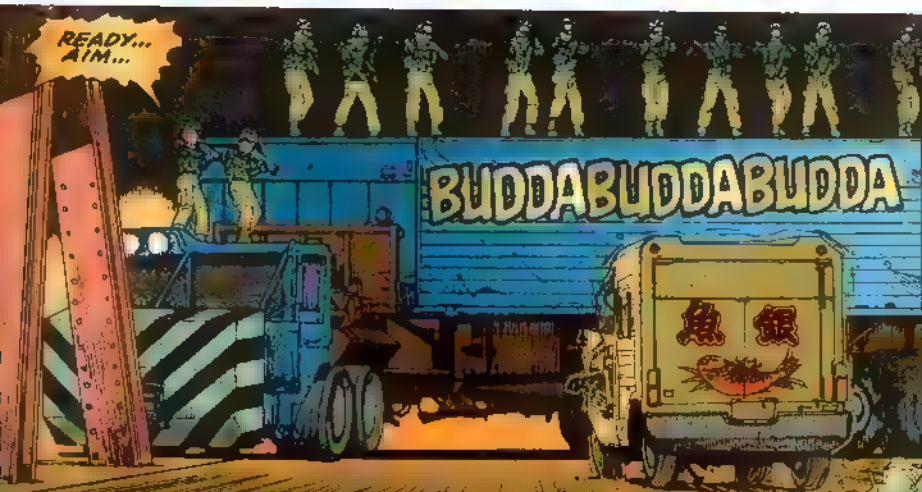
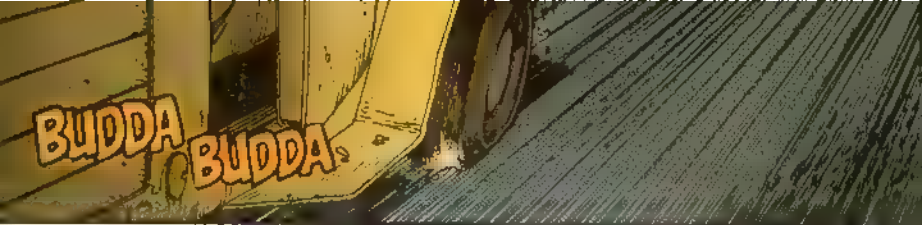


AA-OOOGA

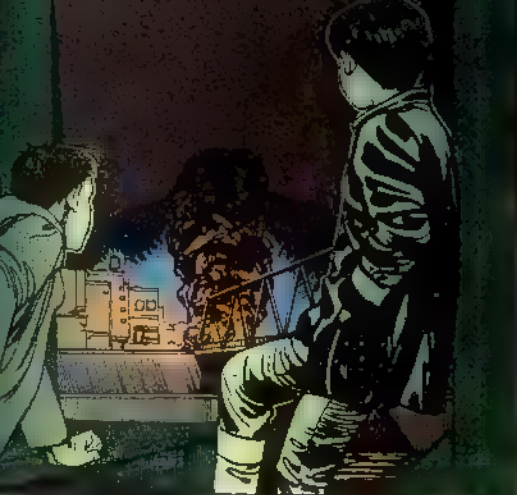




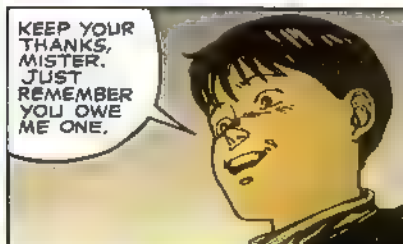








I SUPPOSE
I OUGHT
TO THANK
YOU.



KEEP YOUR
THANKS,
MISTER.
JUST
REMEMBER
YOU OWE
ME ONE.



RIGHT.
LET'S GET
OUT OF
HERE.

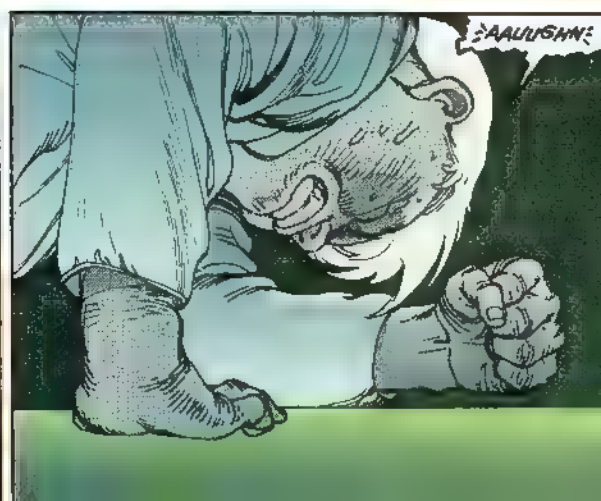


RYU, WAIT
A MINUTE!
THERE'S
SOMETHING
WRONG WITH
HIM!

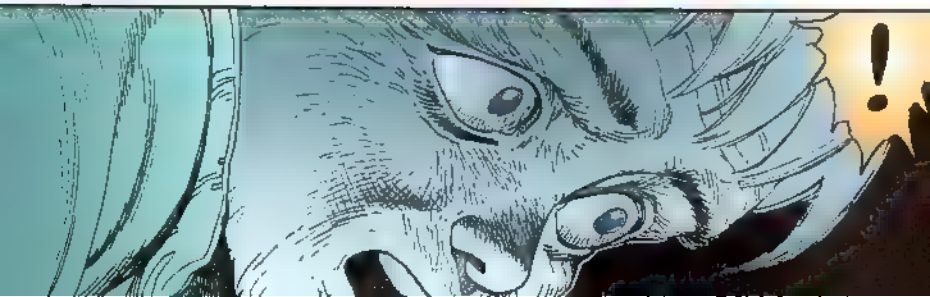
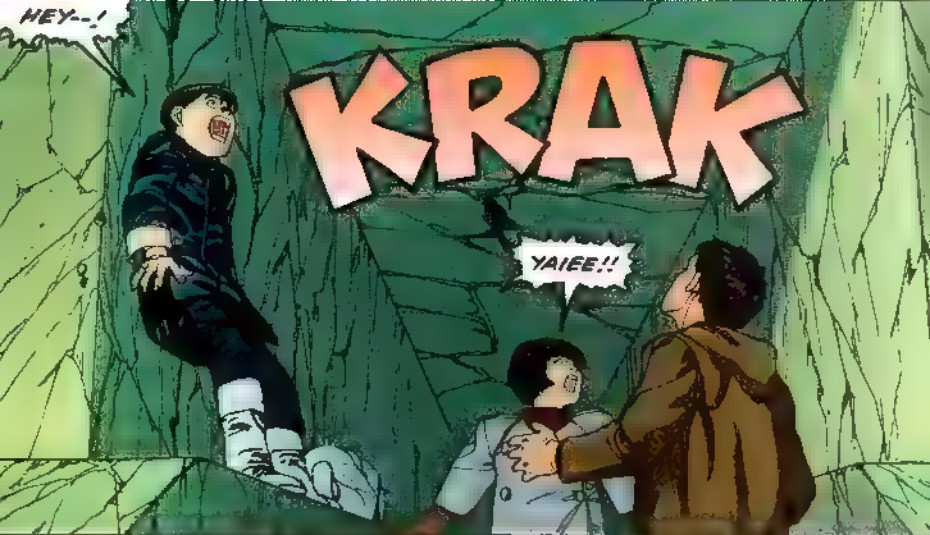
LIKE
WHAT,
KAY?

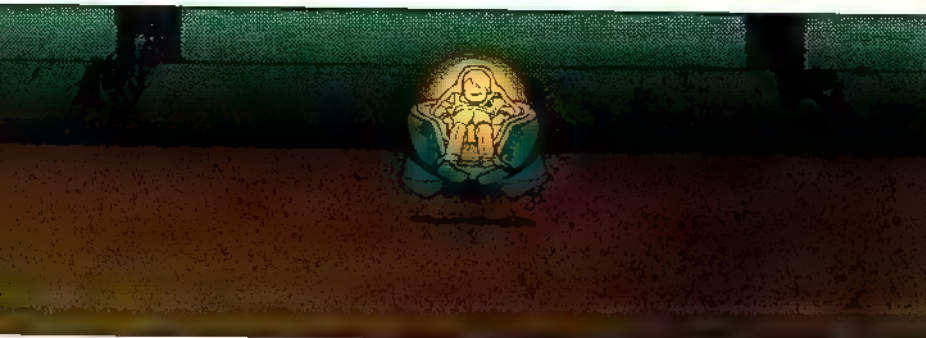


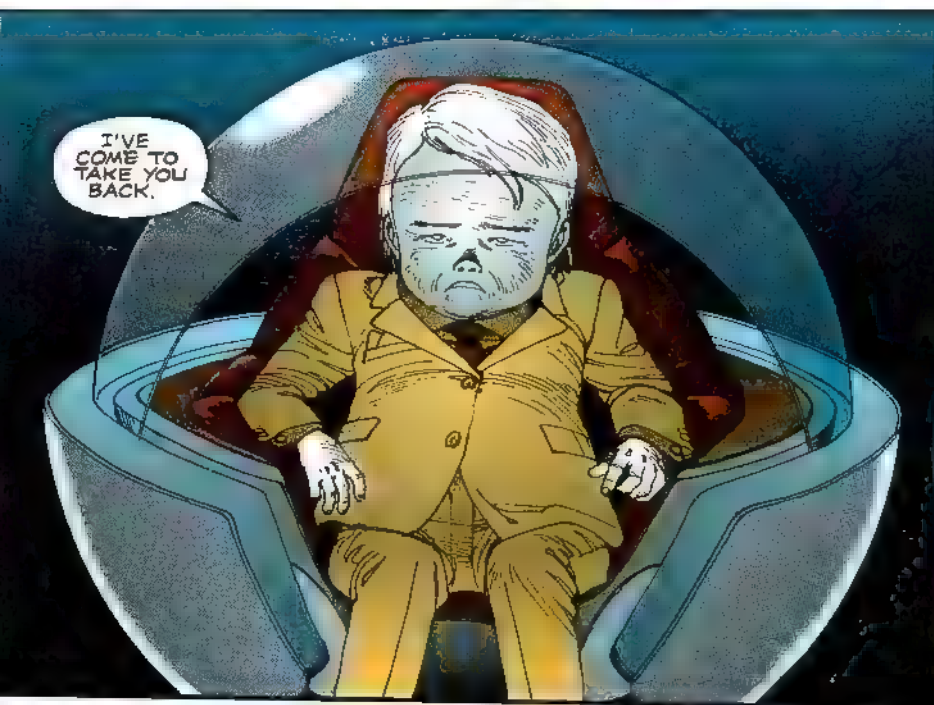
HE'S SWEATING
AND SHAKING
LIKE A LEAF.



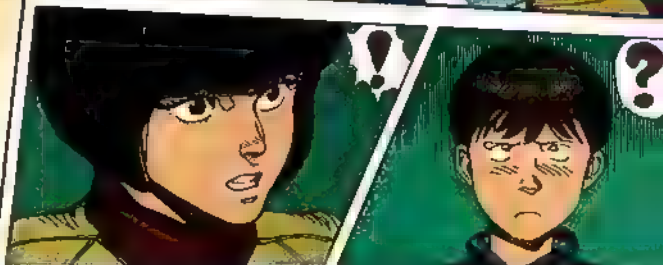
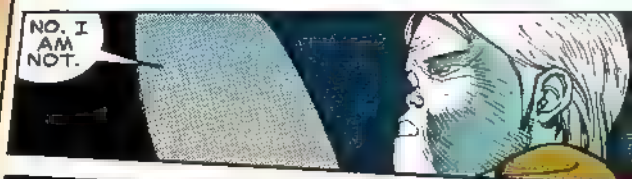
AAUUSHH!



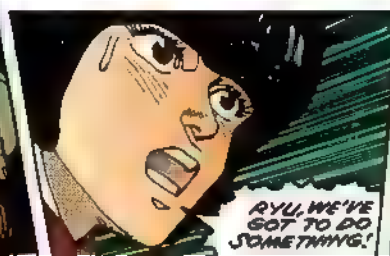
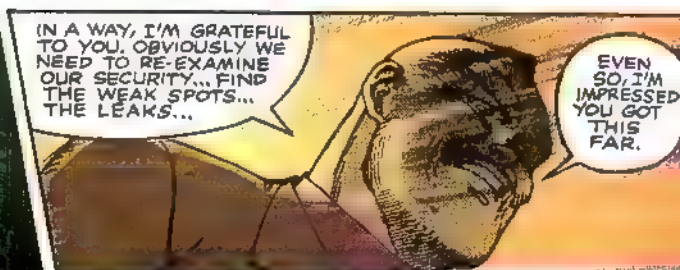
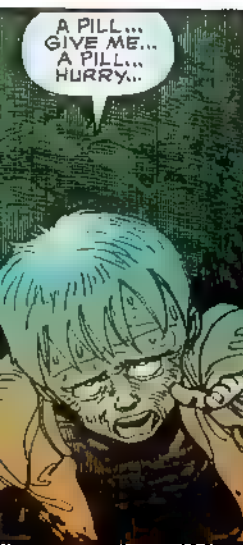


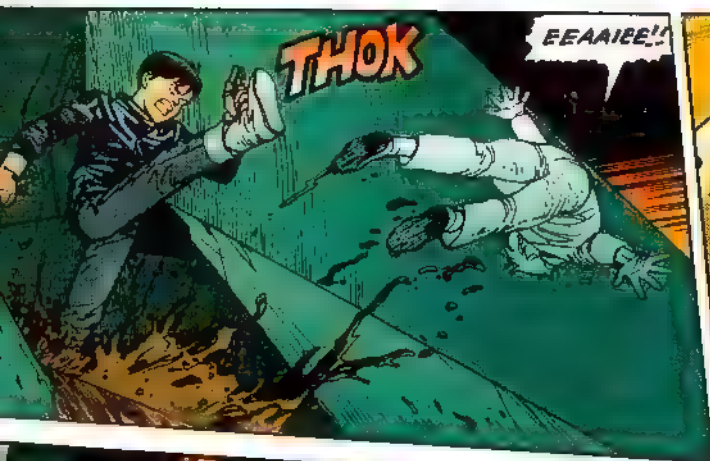


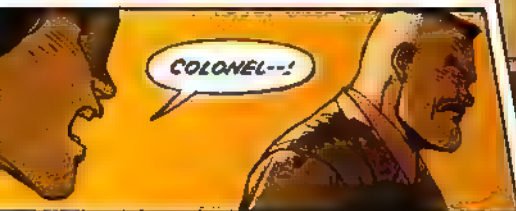












COLONEL--!



YOU'RE
BEING
VERY
FOOLISH.

I DON'T
WANNA
HEAR
IT!!



FOR SOME
REASON,
THIS
LITTLE
CREEP'S
IMPORTANT
TO YOU!!

AND THIS
GUN I'M
HOLDING
HAS A
HAIR-
TRIGGER.



YOU
STILL
REFUSE TO
UNDERSTAND?
VERY
WELL...



MASARU...



COLONEL...
TAKASHI
IS IN A
VERY BAD
WAY.

PRECISELY.

SPEED IS
OF THE
ESSENCE...
AND GUNS
ARE OF
NO USE
NOW.



KNOCK OFF THE CHATTER UP THERE! IF YOU LET US GO, THE FREAK'S ALL YOURS!



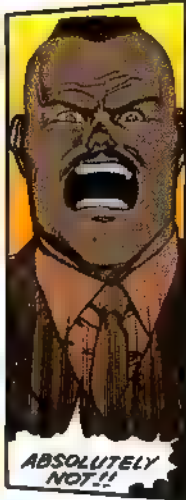
TRUST ME... WE WON'T REALLY HURT YOU.



SO WHAT'S IT GONNA BE?



HE NEEDS A PILL...



ABSOLUTELY NOT!!



HERE GOES...



A PILL...



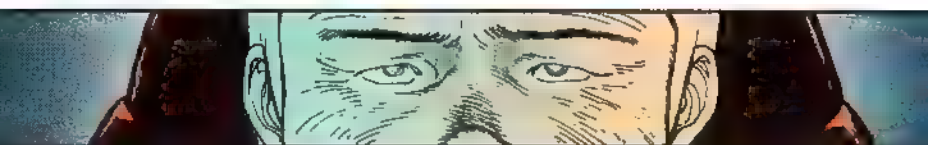
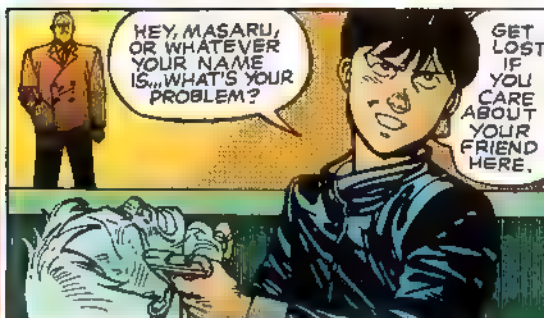
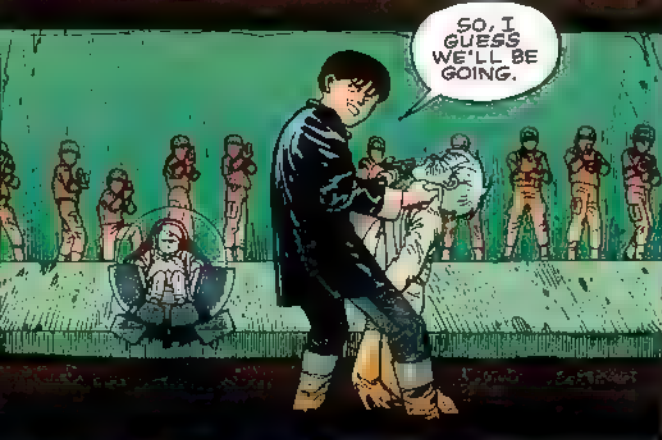
.....



MASARU...



TAKASHI...

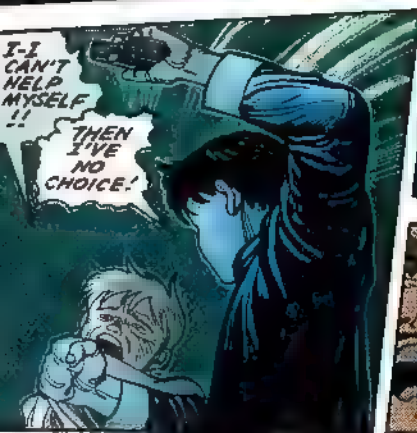




HEY,
WHAT
ARE
YOU--?!



STOP
THAT!!



I-I
CAN'T
HELP
MYSELF
!!

THEN
I'VE
NO
CHOICE!

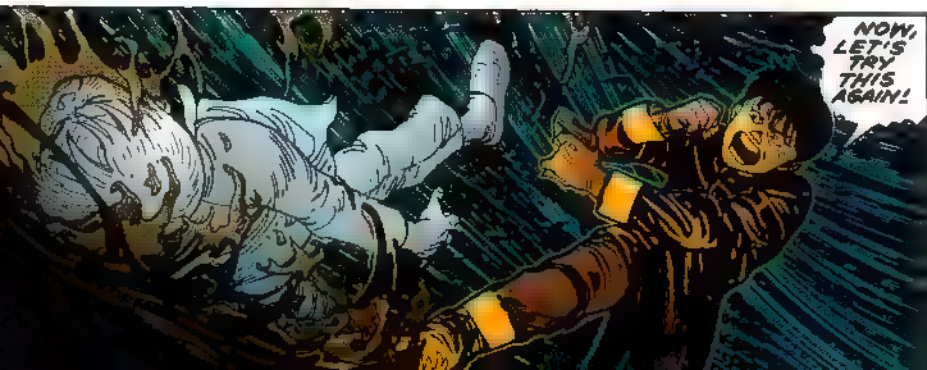


OH--!

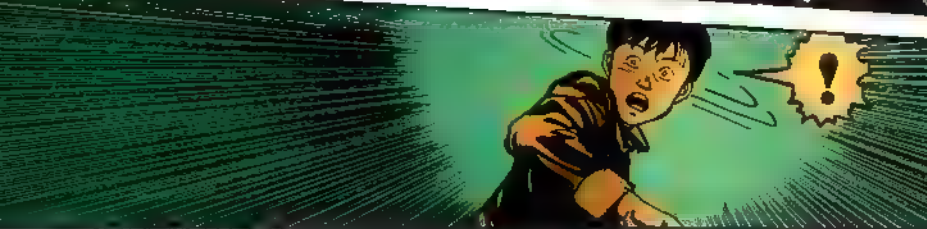
THAK

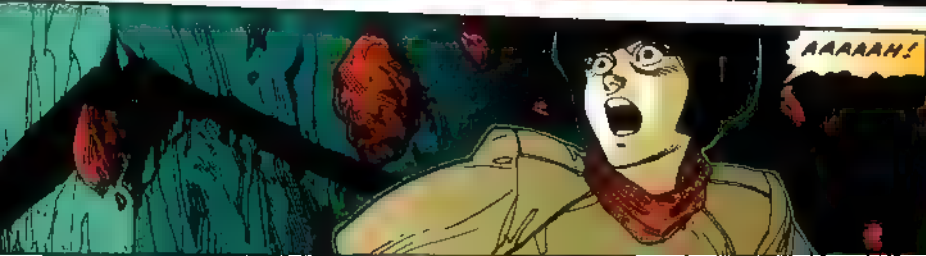


STOP
IT!!



NOW,
LET'S
TRY
THIS
AGAIN!





KROOM

THEY
MUSTN'T
ESCAPE!!

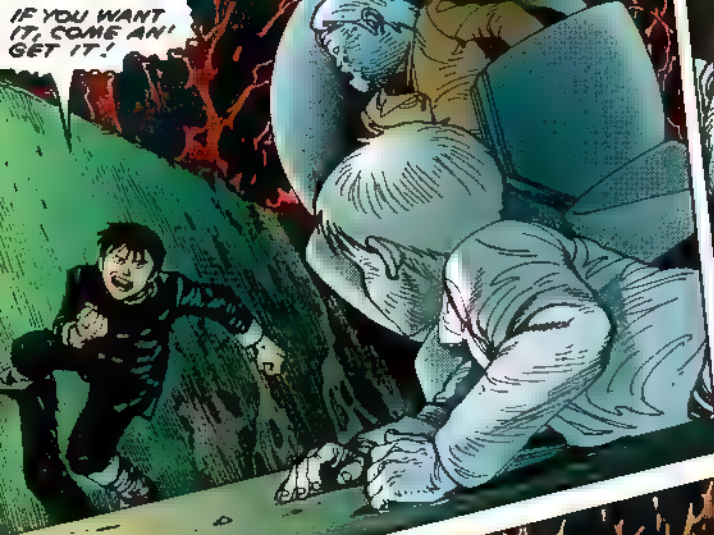


GET
THEM!





IF YOU WANT
IT, COME AN!
GET IT!

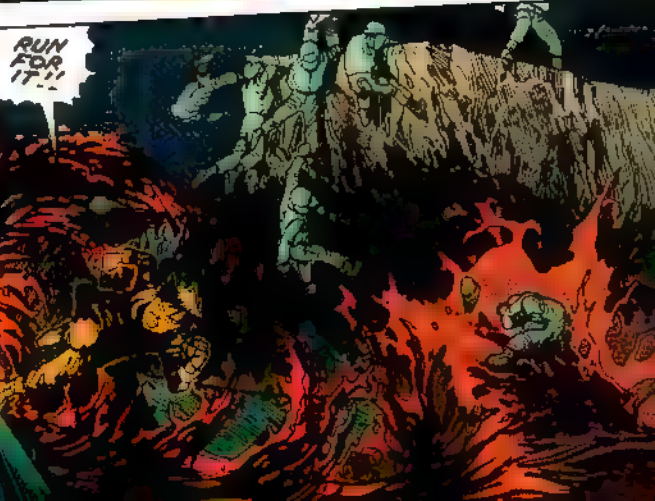
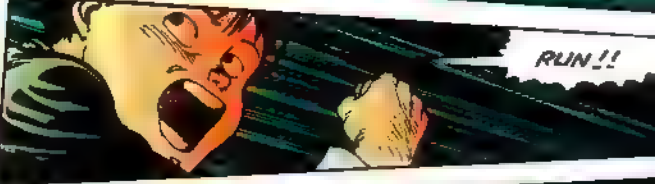


WHOA!

WHAM

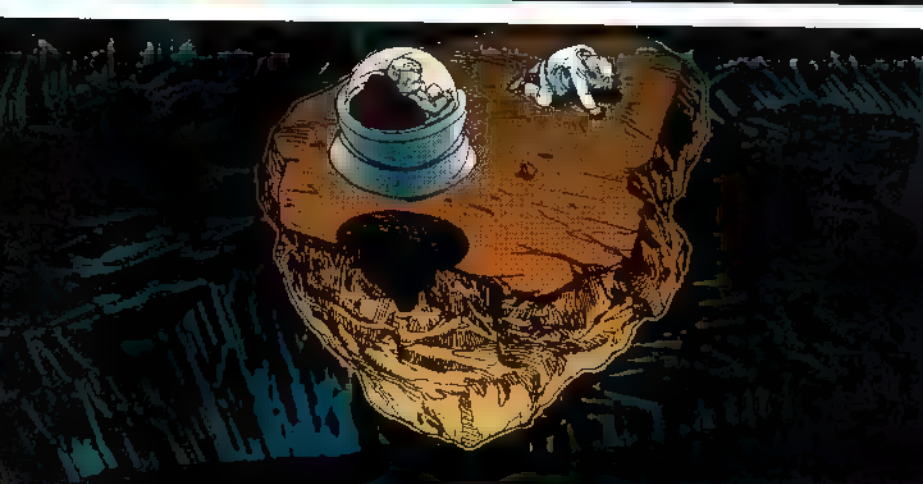
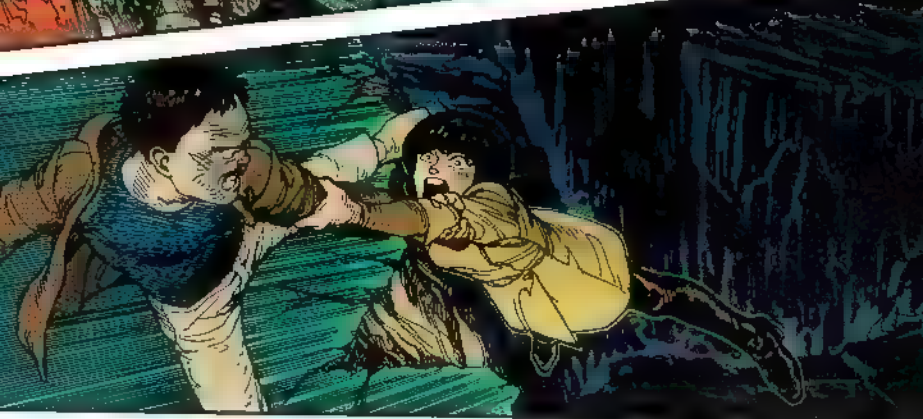
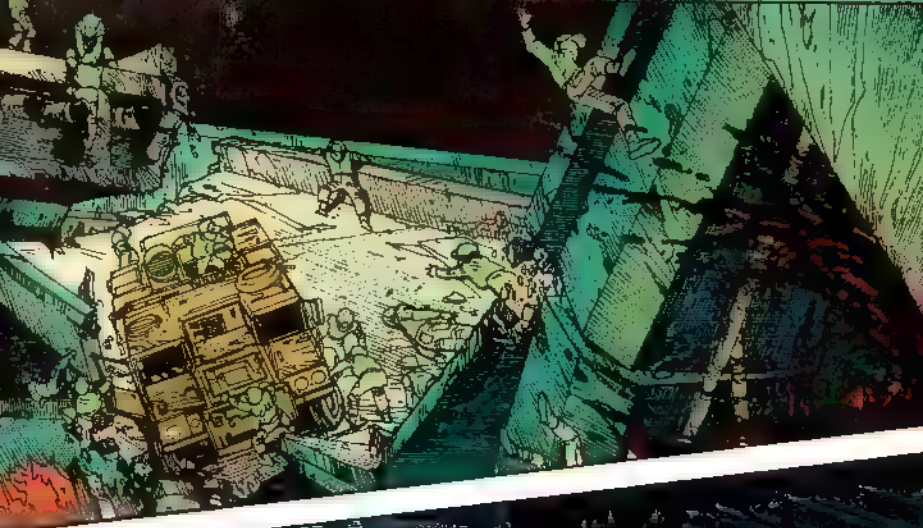


RUN!!

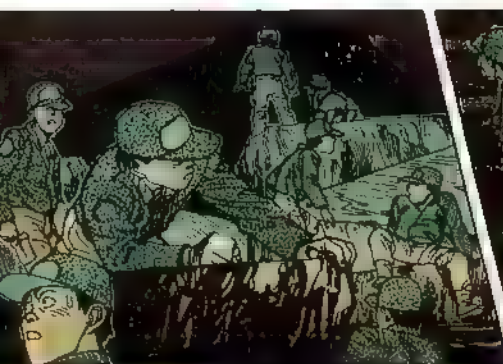


RUN
FOR
IT!!

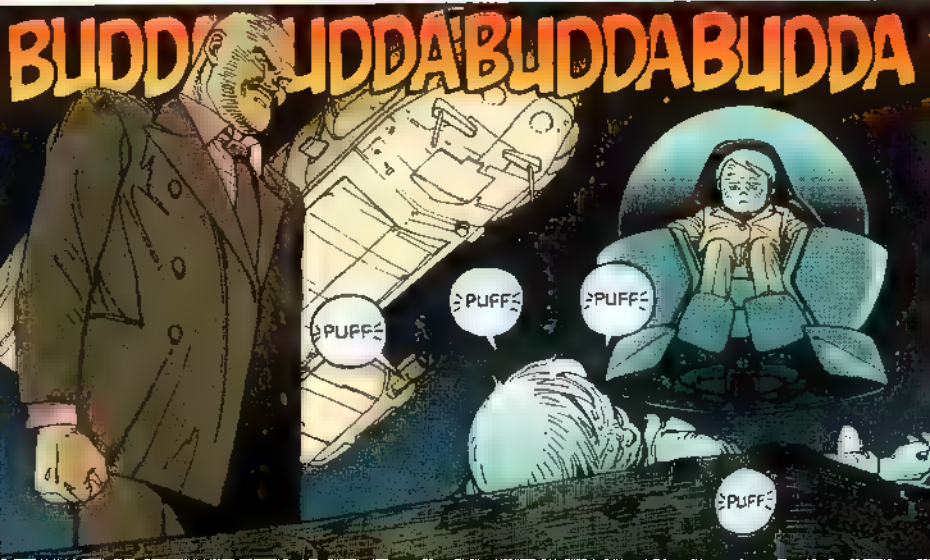
KRAK

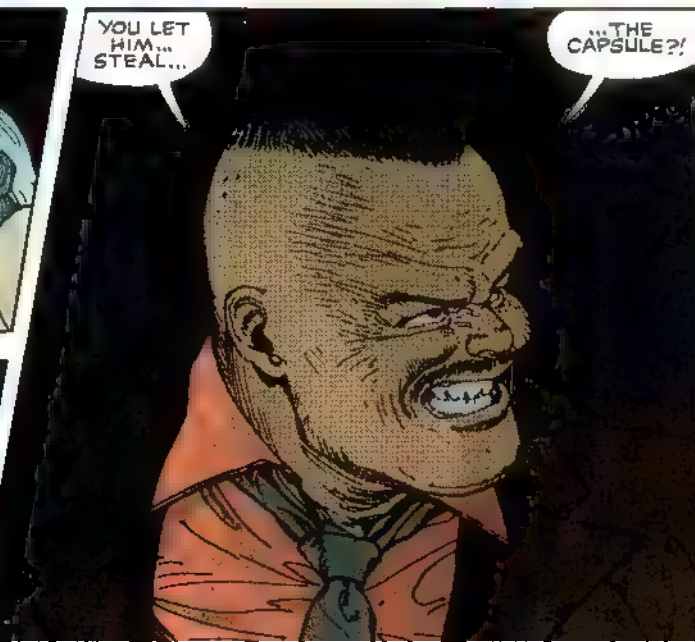
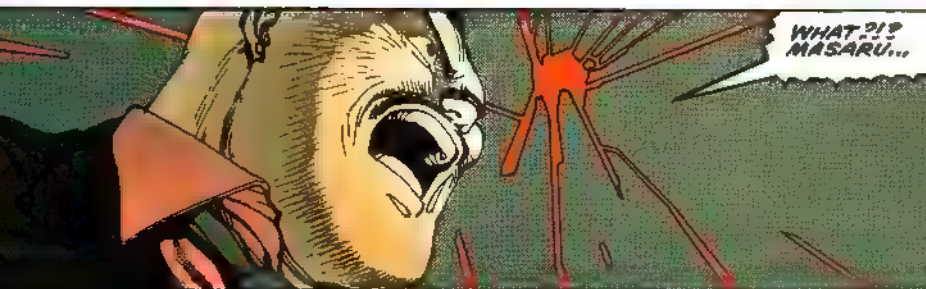
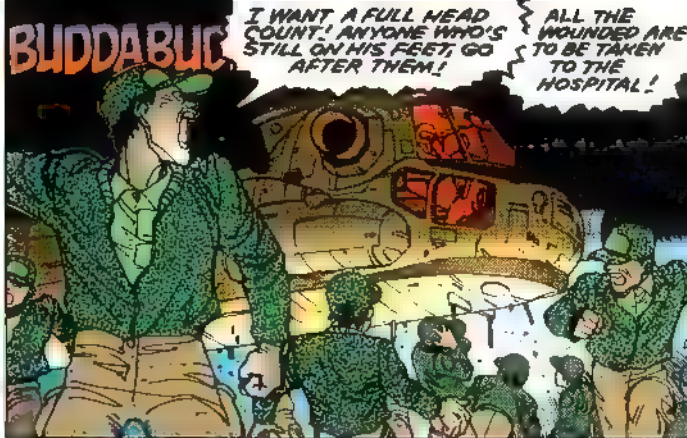
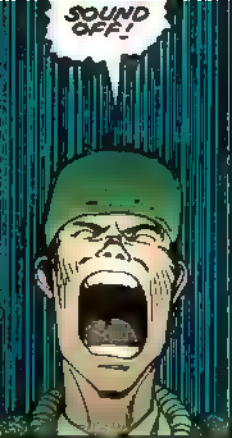




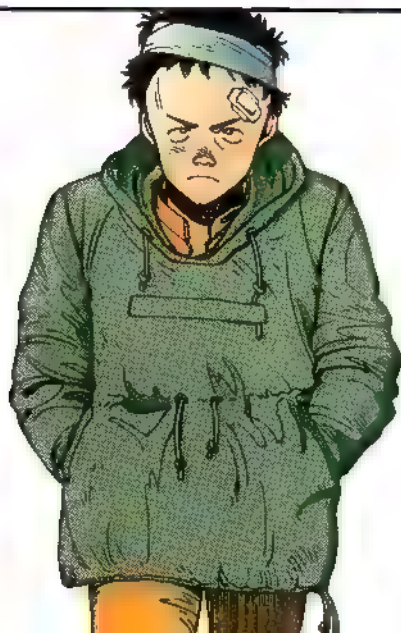
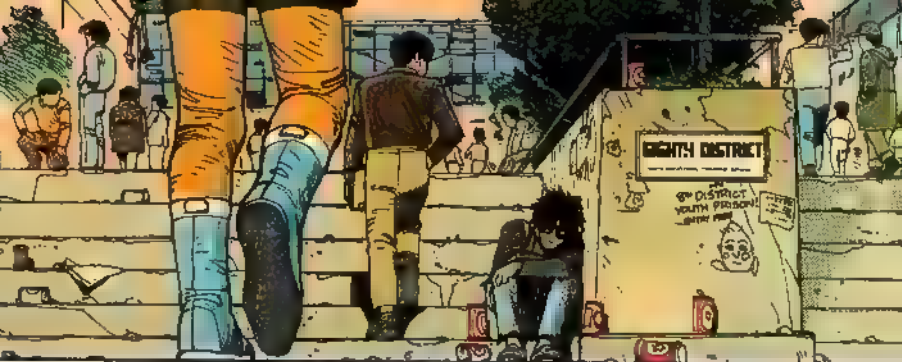


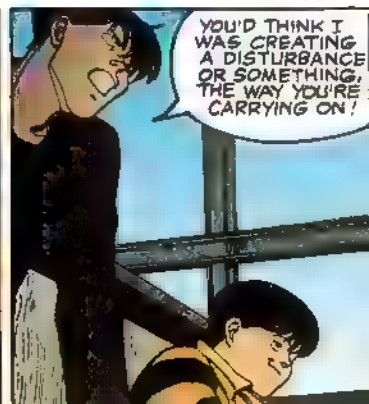
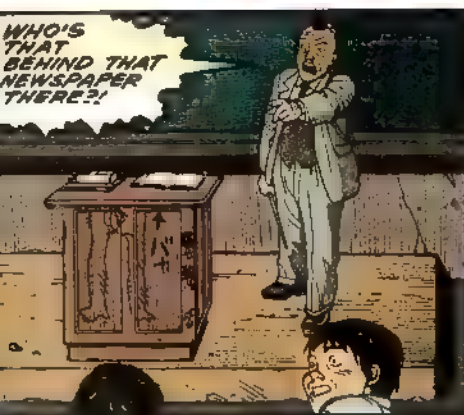
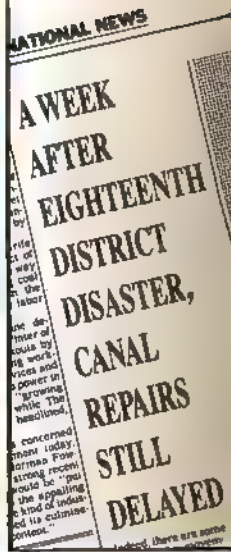
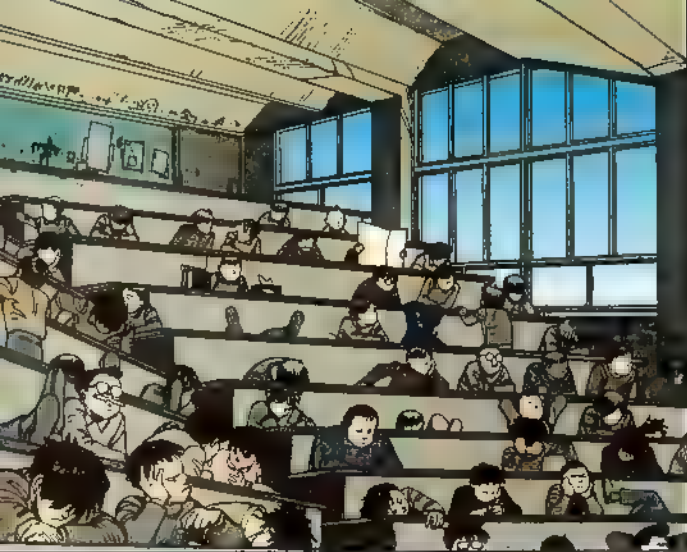
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA

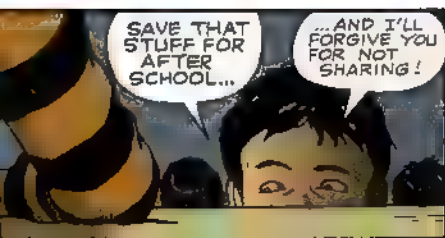
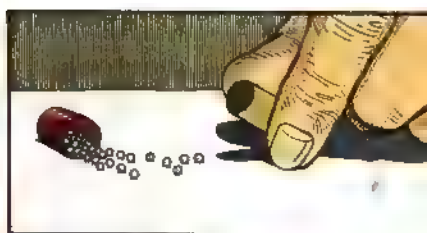
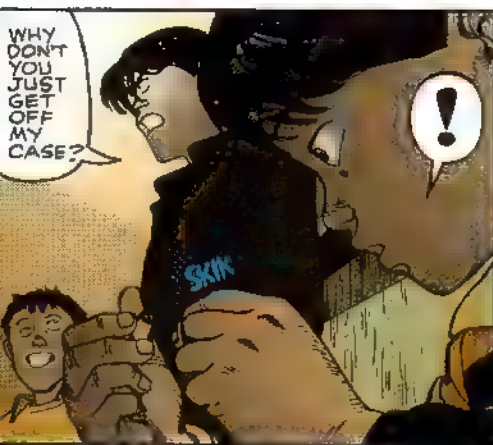
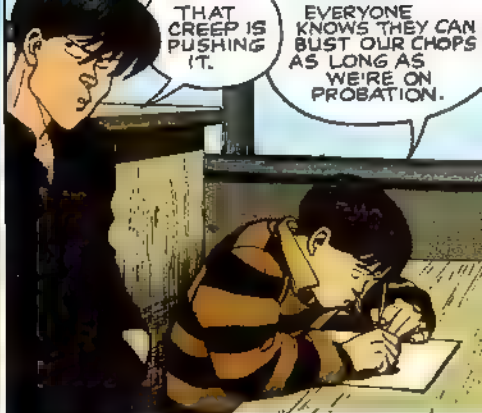
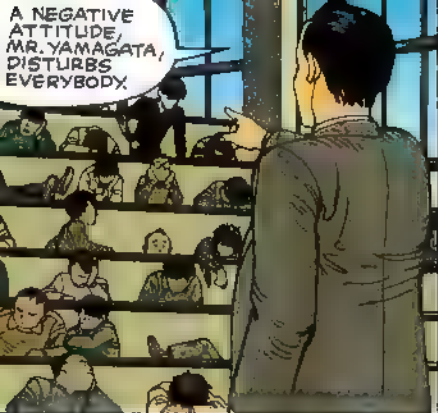










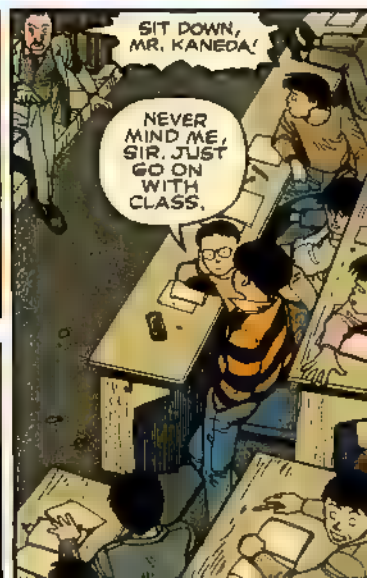
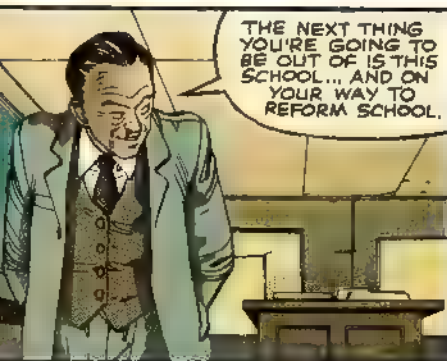


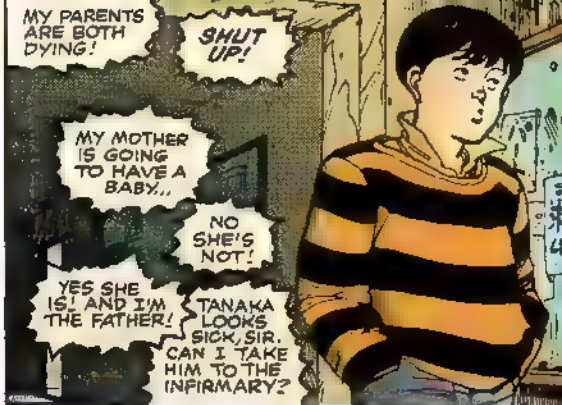
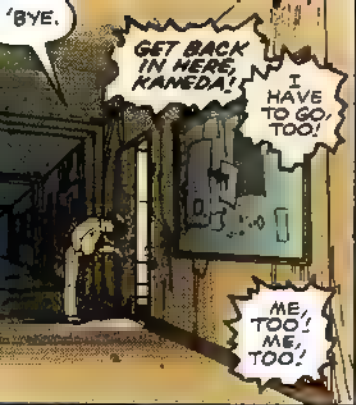


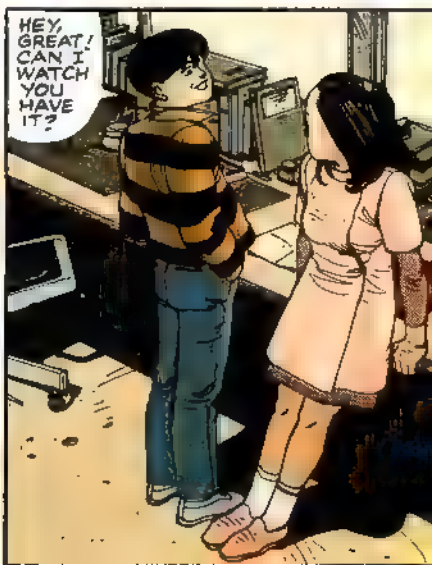
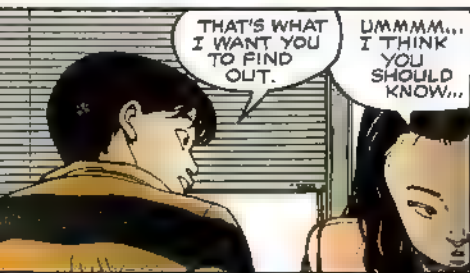
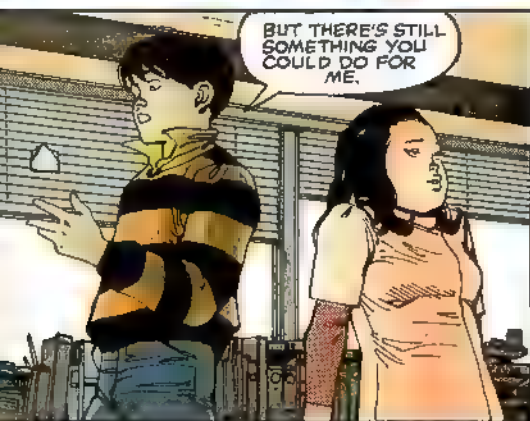
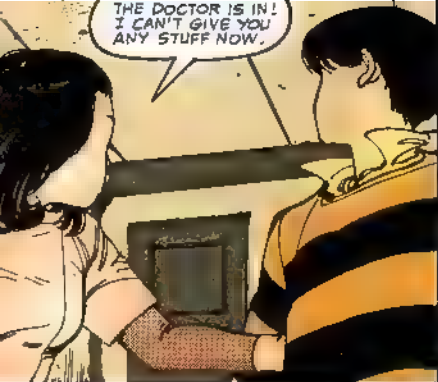
OF COURSE NOT,
JUST WITH LOSING.
I'M OUT TEN BUCKS
THIS WEEK.

HEY, KANEDA,
GIVE ME
SOME!

I ALREADY
TOLD
YOU...







TROMP TROMP
TROMP TROMP



THERE
YOU
ARE!!

INFIRMA

SKRSSHH

KANEDA!!
TETSUO'S
BACK!

REALLY?!

BE RIGHT
THERE!!

AH...

LISTEN...



I'LL BE
BACK
LATER
FOR THE
USUAL
GOODIES.

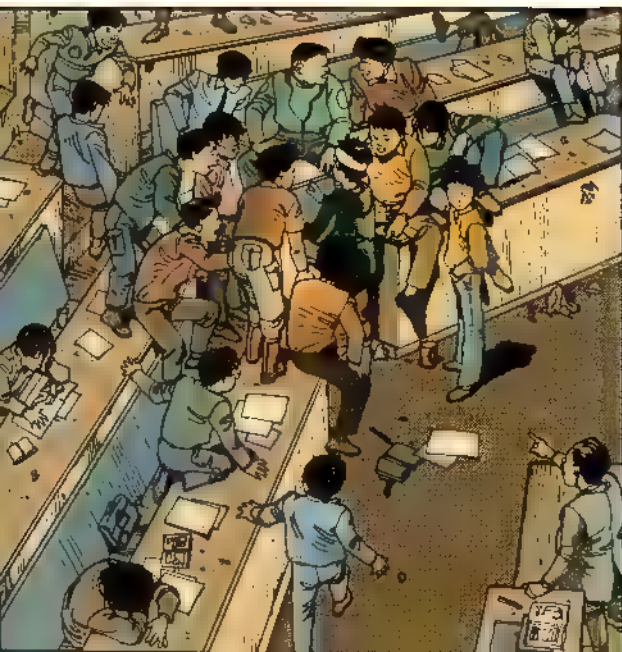


CHECK ON
THAT NEW
STUFF BY
THEN,
OKAY?



SEE
YOU.

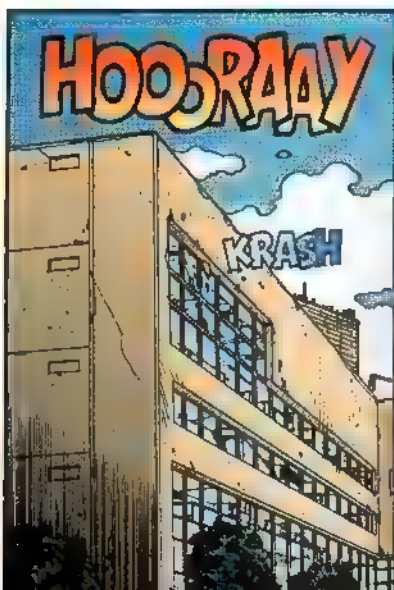
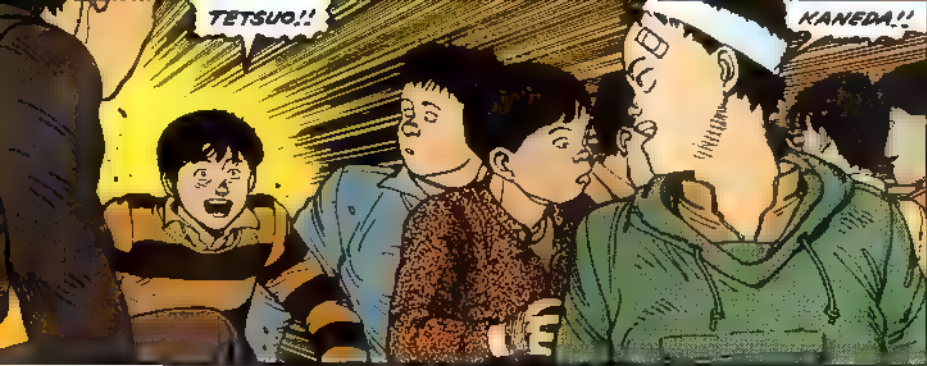
SIT
DOWN
THIS
INSTANT!!

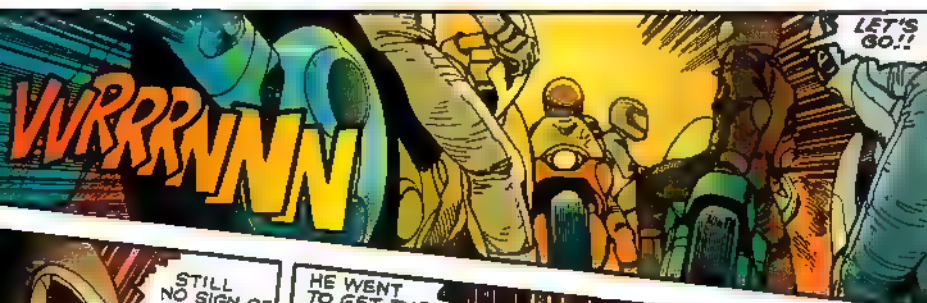
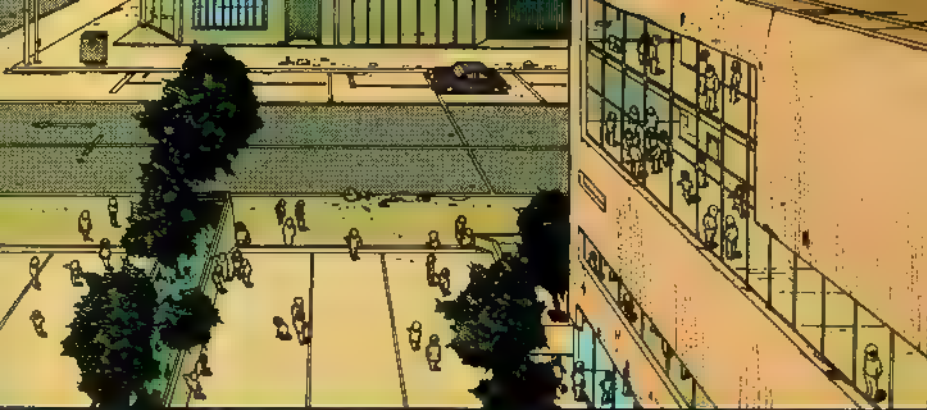


I THOUGHT
YOU WERE
DEAD!

ARE
YOU
REALLY
ALL
RIGHT?

SURE.
IT WAS
JUST A
SCRATCH.



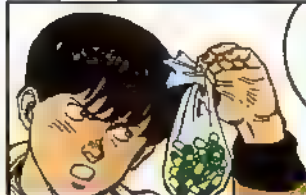




WHERE DID THAT STUFF YOU GAVE ME EARLIER COME FROM?

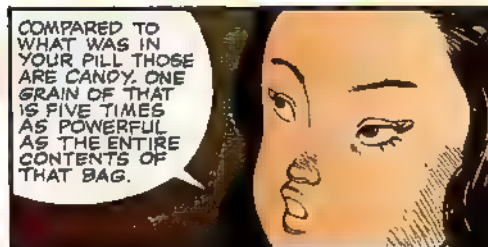
DID YOU FIND OUT WHAT IT IS?

PART OF IT... BUT IT CONTAINED CERTAIN ELEMENTS THAT DEFIED ANALYSIS, AT LEAST BY OUR EQUIPMENT.

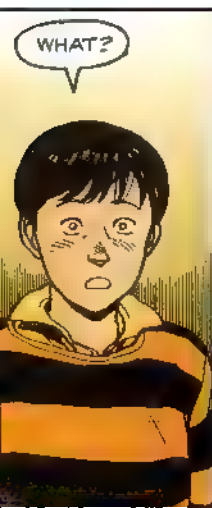


SO, DON'T KEEP ME IN SUSPENSE. THE GANG IS STILL WAITING FOR THEIR STUFF YOU KNOW.

COMPARED TO WHAT WAS IN YOUR PILL THOSE ARE CANDY. ONE GRAIN OF THAT IS FIVE TIMES AS POWERFUL AS THE ENTIRE CONTENTS OF THAT BAG.



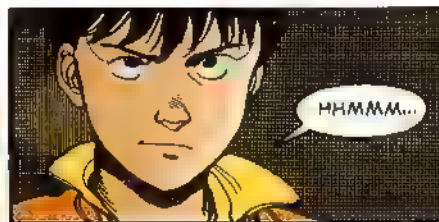
WHAT?



IF SOMEONE TOOK THE WHOLE THING, HE'D GO MAD... OR DIE.

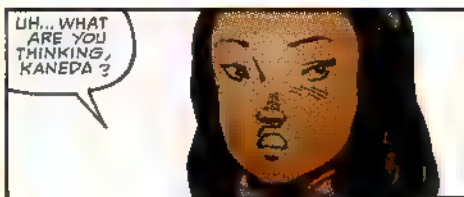
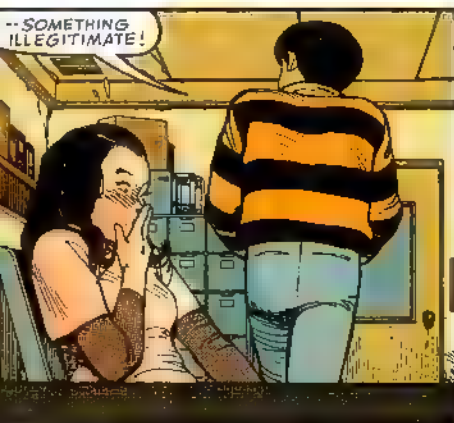
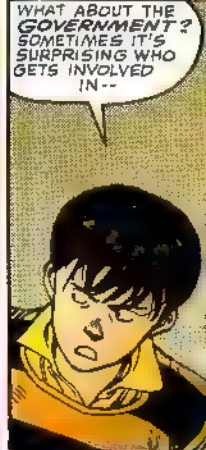


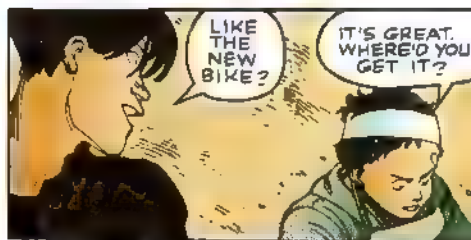
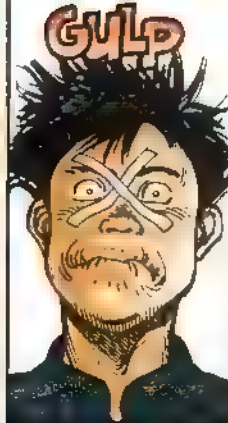
HHMMM...

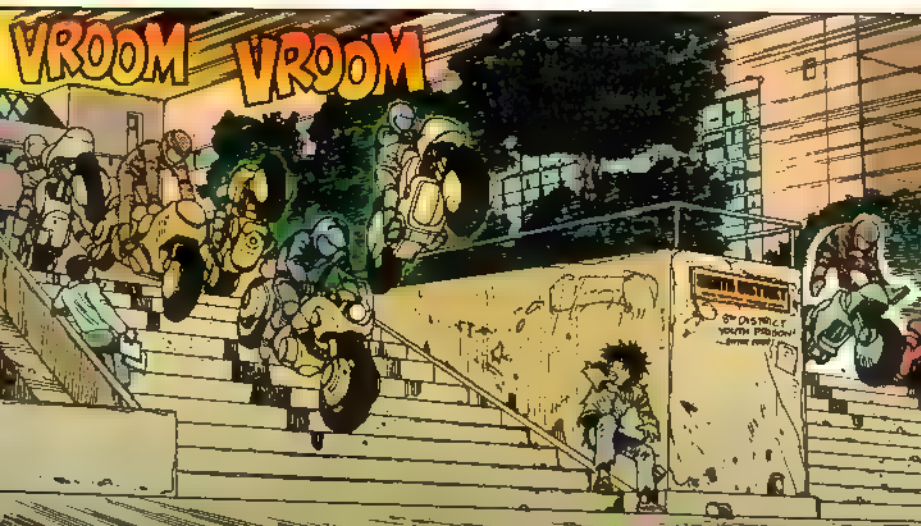
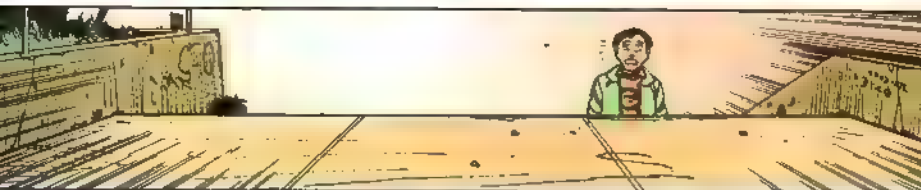


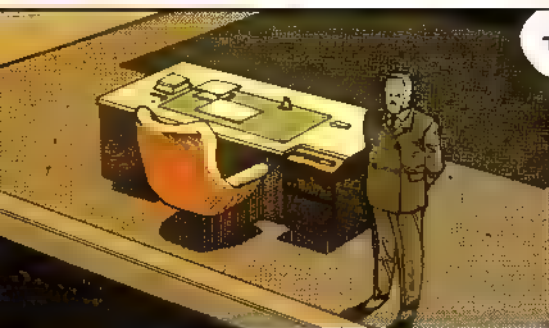
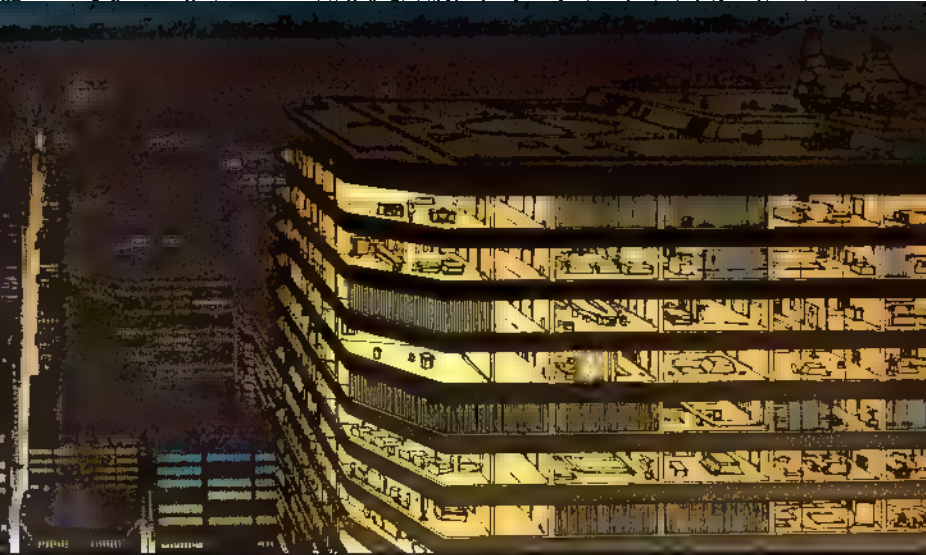
ONE MORE THING...



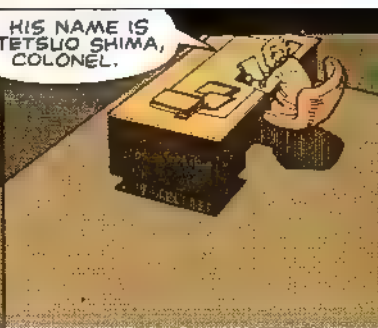








HIS NAME IS
TETSUO SHIMA,
COLONEL.

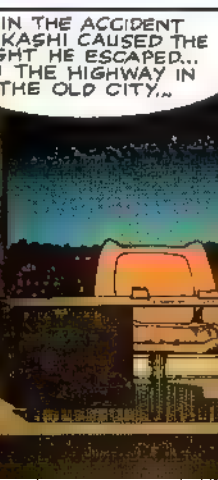


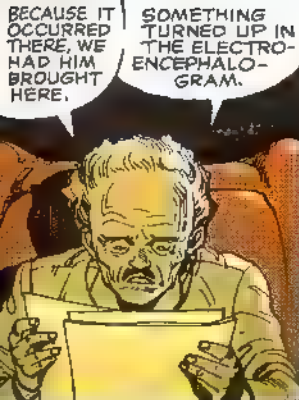
HE ATTENDS
THE EIGHTH
DISTRICT
VOCATIONAL
TRAINING
SCHOOL.

AND
HE WAS
HURT...



...IN THE ACCIDENT
TAKASHI CAUSED THE
NIGHT HE ESCAPED...
ON THE HIGHWAY IN
THE OLD CITY...

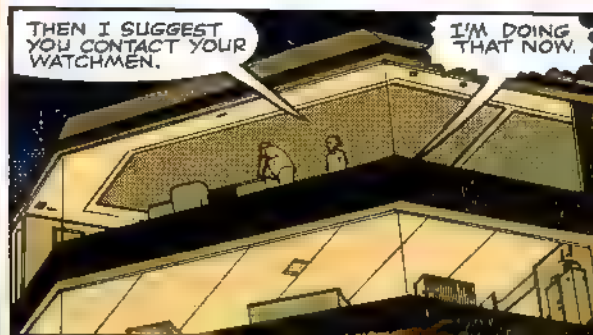
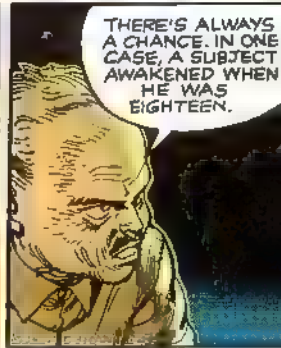


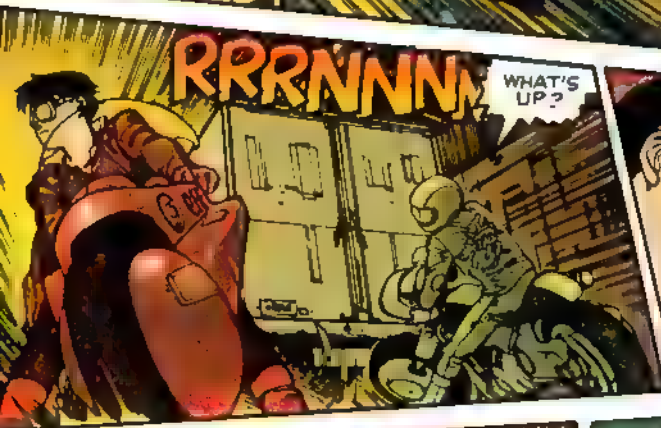


WE CHECKED AND RECHECKED IT. THERE'S A PATTERN TO HIS BRAIN WAVES I'VE NEVER ENCOUNTERED BEFORE.



WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF HIM DEVELOPING?







HEADS
UP!

AAOooooo



LOOKS LIKE
THEY'RE
GONNA
SHOW...

YEAH!



READY
OR NOT, HERE
THEY COME!!



VVVRRRRRRRN



OUT OF
THE
WAY!

LET ME
THROUGH!!

CLEAR
THE
PATH!!

FORGET IT.
WE'RE ALL
STUCK HERE.
THERE'S
NOWHERE
TO GO!



NEXT ISSUE: **NUMBER 41!**

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

The creator of **Akira** was born in April of 1954 in Japan's Miyagi Prefecture, an agricultural and fishing province some 400 kilometers northeast of Tokyo. He grew up there and attended Sanuma High School, which, for a rural school, seems particularly favored by the comic book muse. Another prominent comics artist, **Yoji Kamata**, is also a graduate, and, some years earlier, one of Japan's most famous comics creators, **Shotaro Ishinomori**, known world-wide for his **Cyborg 009**, **Kamen Rider**, and current best-seller, **Japan Inc.**

In high school, Otomo became, in his own words, "crazy about the movies." American films of the period in particular seemed to be capturing the new spirit of youthful unrest and rebellion all over the world. Movies such as **Bonnie and Clyde**, **Easy Rider**, **Five Easy Pieces**, and **The Strawberry Statement** had particular impact upon him at the time and some of their sensibility can still be detected in **Akira** and other work.

Soon after graduating high school in 1973, Otomo moved to Tokyo. His goal was to become a comics artist. He achieved this in August of 1973 when his first published work, an adaptation of the **Prosper Mérimée** short novel **Mateo Falcone**, appeared in the weekly comics magazine, **Action**.

Over the next few years, Otomo created a number of short stories in comics form. These would range from twenty to thirty pages, about the length of a full comic in the U.S. But in

Japan it is not unusual for an ongoing comics story to run to a thousand pages or more. Customarily, stories first appear in serialized segments of twenty to thirty pages in a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly comics magazine and then, if popular, are collected into books of around 200 pages. During this period, Otomo's pieces were most regularly appearing in **Action** magazine. Later, they were collected into book form beginning with **Short Piece** in 1979. This collection was followed by **Highway Star** (October 1979), **Good Weather** (March 1981), and **Boogie Woogie Waltz** (May 1982).

Having achieved a promising degree of success and attention with these short works, Otomo began to apply his skills to longer material. In 1979, publication began on **Fire Ball**, a story built around a human versus mega-computer theme. Though it appeared in a limited circulation magazine and is, to date, still uncompleted, **Fire Ball** marked the beginning of Otomo's interest in the science-fiction action genre and established his following among high school and college students deeply addicted to the visual culture. **Fire Ball** was the natural forerunner of Otomo's two most acclaimed works, **Domu** and **Akira**.

Domu is a story centering upon the conflict between two residents of a modern day high rise apartment building. One is an old man, the other a little girl. Each possesses deadly psychic powers and their mounting duel has devastating consequences

for all around them. **Domu** began serialization in January of 1980 and continued for almost two years. When completed, it was revised by Otomo and issued in book form in August of 1983. **Domu** was an instant best seller as well as ■ subject of some controversy. It created ■ stir when it won Japan's science-fiction Grand Prix of 1983 for best s-f novel, the first time the prize had been awarded to a comics work.

The success of this 230 page graphic novel led Otomo to undertake an even more ambitious project which, when completed, would number some 1800 pages. As a place to launch this new work, he chose **Young Magazine** published by **Kodansha Ltd.** The bi-weekly magazine had been struggling to win the same high school-college student audience that Otomo perceived as the most aware and sensitive readership for the new directions he worked to achieve. The work was, of course, **Akira** and with its tradition-breaking appearance the circulation of **Young Magazine** began to rise. Today it is over one million. Each collected volume of **Akira** released in book form broke new ground in terms of format and price as well as in enthusiastic reader reaction. Four have appeared to date. The fifth and final volume is planned for Spring of 1989. When completed, the saga will have a total of three million copies in print.

Along with other comics work—such as **Sayonara Nippon** (Good-bye Japan), a tragi-comic story of a Japanese karate

expert's failed attempt to become ■ hero in New York, **Kibun-wa mo Senso** (Feel Like War), based upon an original script by **Toshihiko Yahagi** about a Japanese youth in China during World War III, and **Henzeru-to-Gureteru** (Hanzel and Gretel), a collection of parodies on **Grimm's Fairy Tales** and other classics—Otomo has remained interested and involved in film.

In 1982, he took about six months off to make his own sixteen millimeter film, **Jyu-O Warerani** (Give Me ■ Gun, Give Me Freedom). He produced it without any commercial backing, casting it with his own friends. When finished, it played at Kinokuniya Hall, a Tokyo theater for avant garde plays and films. Otomo has also continued to work in animated film as well as television commercials for such clients as Suntory, Canon, and Honda. Currently he has just completed the animated movie of **Akira** for which he acted as director, scenarist, designer and illustrator.

In Japan, there is ■ great deal of speculation about just where the title name of **Akira** originates (American readers have several issues to go before this character actually makes an appearance). There are those who assume it is homage to one of Otomo's favorite movie directors, **Akira Kurosawa**. Others have claimed it is the name of a drinking buddy of Otomo's from years ago. But Otomo himself never gives an answer. He just laughs. And the speculation, like interest in the series itself, continues to grow.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

writer/illustrator

YASUMITSU SUETAKE

chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

MAKOTO SHIOSAKI

SATOSHI TAKABATAKE

assistants to Mr. Otomo

HIROSHI HIRATA

designer, AKIRA calligraph

AKIRA SAITO

designer, Kodansha edition

Kodansha Ltd.

YOKO UMEZAWA

with **LINDA M. YORK**

translation

KOICHI YURI

editor, Kodansha edition

NORIYUKI OKAZAKI

YUKA ANDO

editorial coordinators

Epic Comics

JO DUFFY

english adaptation

STEVE OLIFF

colorist

MICHAEL HIGGINS

letterer

HECTOR COLLAZO

ED MAGALONG

ROBERT CAROSELLA

production

MARK CHIARELLO

editorial assistant, Epic edition

ARCHIE GOODWIN

editor, Epic edition

As earth recovers from World War III, strange new events are shaping in Neo-Tokyo. A pursuit has begun. Its object is a wizened face child with incredible telekinetic powers and the mark Number 26 on his palm. He holds clues to something prized and feared. Something or someone called...AKIRA. Two pursuers are the mysterious girl, Kay, and her companion, Ryu. Opposing them are troops of a secret government force. Swept along is the rebellious young motorcycle gang leader, Kaneda. Attracted to Kay and angry with Number 26 for the injury of a friend, Kaneda becomes part of the violent cat-and-mouse game which leads into the city's sewer system and a showdown with two new players...The Colonel and Masaru, Number 27.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S



This scan produced by:

X-FUTURE

I love um

I buy um

I preserve um

